



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

BUDGET DELIBERATIONS TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2005

Board of Finance Members Present: Robert K. Pagani-Chairman, Richard J. Cleary, Robert J. Clements, Vaughn E. Gerber, Mark A. Joyse, Barry C. Pinto

Others Present: N. DiCorleto-Fin Officer, D. Milanovich-First Selectman, G. Daigle, A. Ugolik-Budget Advisory, N. Way and A. Miller-Selectmen, A. Lawrence-Fire Marshal, P. Michaud-Dir DPW, P. Hany-EVAC, M. Varney-Chief EVFD, D. Varney, G. Feldman-EVFD, M. Konieczny-Res. Trooper, R. Tedford-Dir P&R, E. Graziani-Sr. Ctr, D. Crayton-Dir. Human Services, S. Phillips-Hall Mem. Library, Y. Cantor, J. Burns, N. and J. Willis.

Chairman Robert Pagani opened the deliberation at 7:30 pm.

Citizen's Forum

A. Ugolik, 28 Fairview Ave, asked if the Pinney House was included in this budget. She was told that it was not.

The chairman began with the capital improvements budget. The following recommendations were made.

Capital Improvements

Unimproved Road Improvements was kept at \$100,000, LOCIP at \$101,760 with state reimbursement, and Road Overlay at \$238,038. The Town Hall cooling system will be deferred and the Town Hall renovations account will be cut \$15,000 to fund at \$25,000. The Windermere School soffits do need to be fixed, and Mr. Pagani felt that there are enough funds remaining in the school project account to do this work. Mr. Milanovich felt it was an item that should have been done through the school maintenance budget.

Joe Burns, 228 Windsorville Rd, stated that he agreed that the school needs to be maintained but questioned whether the school needed a sprinkler system on the field.

Recreation parks upgrades at \$18,000 will be funded as this is a continuing project, but the police cruiser will be deferred for a reduction of \$26,545. The Public Works Roadside mower will remain in the budget for \$108,000 and \$62,700 for revaluation.

The Crystal Lake School well will be funded at \$265,000 as this is the best estimate at this time. There is no way out of this project as the Town is under order by the State to complete the work. Nora Willis, Crystal Lake Rd, asked what the Town being a water company will entail. Mr. Pagani stated that the Board of Education maintenance will take care of the testing etc.

The Fire Dept. preemption system is being deferred for a savings of \$24,000, the water shuttle equipment will remain for \$11,500, and the new ambulance will remain in the budget and will be funded from revenues generated by the ambulance corps.

Mr. Pagani stated that he would like to cut the open space fund in the amount of \$140,000. He and the First Selectman consulted the Town Attorney on this matter and her opinion is that the Board of Selectmen should pass an ordinance to establish this fund and then fund it through a bond issue in the fall. Mr. Joyse asked what happens if the referendum fails. Mr. Pagani stated that the Board of Finance can come back to appropriate money for this purpose. He stated that he was willing to revisit this item if that happens.

The Capital Improvements Budget with \$262,800 in reductions now stands at \$1,233,960 less revenues and grants of \$405,445 for a net amount of \$828,515.

General Government Budget.

Mr. Pagani stated that most budgets were within the guideline. The following budget reductions were recommended.

Account 150 Town Counsel to be funded at \$86,500 which is a reduction of \$10,000.
Account 220 Econ. Dev. Comm. to be funded at \$10,000, which is a reduction of \$1,700.
Account 230 Planning and Zoning to be funded at \$107,156 which is a reduction of \$70,000. This leaves enough money for the Plan of Development and if the changes to the zoning regulations begin before the fiscal year ends, the money can be appropriated in the interim.

Account 270 Conservation Comm. to be funded at \$7,750 which is a reduction of \$25,000.

Account 310 EVFD to be reduced by \$13,950 from technical equipment which will fund the first five items on the list.

Account 550 Cultural Arts Commission to be funded at \$14,600 which is a reduction of \$4,000. It was thought that the sound system from the High School can be used.

Account 1011 Capital Reserve to be put back to \$100 for a reduction of \$162,218.

The Chairman and the Finance Officer will meet tomorrow to prepare for further changes and fine tuning to the budget on Thursday. More reductions will mean reduction in services and programs.

Nora Willis, Crystal Lake Rd, asked about corporate sponsorship for the television studio at the High School. Dennis Milanovich stated that it could be a problem with advertising, etc. and needs to be thought through. He stated that the reductions in funding from the State to all the towns, as well as unfunded mandates, are the crux of the budget problems.

Mr. Clements stated that some members of the Crystal Lake Association urged the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to fund the Crystal Lake water testing program. He stated that if it is done, the Town needs to make sure the Association gets billed for their portion.

MOTION (CLEMENTS) SECONDED (JOYSE) AND PASSED TO FUND THE CRYSTAL LAKE WATER QUALITY TESTING FOR \$4,000 WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT CRYSTAL LAKE ASSOCIATION IS PAYING FOR 50%. VOTE: 5 AYES, PAGANI ABSTAINED.

Nora Willis stated that the whole town benefits from Crystal Lake use.

Mr. Pagani read a recommendation from the Board of Selectmen regarding an expansion to the tax relief program for people on low and fixed incomes. It recommends that the Town expand the program to match the relief amounts now given. The State reimburses the town for what is rebated now; this program would have to be funded by the Town. Currently the tax relief costs \$83,644.

Mr. Burns, 228 Windsorville Rd, stated that he likes the idea and feels the senior citizens and people on fixed incomes deserve a break.

Mr. Milanovich stated that perhaps the Finance Officer would come up with a figure or percentage that would alleviate the increase in taxes based on the amount of households that qualify now. The Town can choose to finance none or some based on this recommendation. The Chairman and the Finance Officer will discuss this tomorrow also and with the Tax Assessor.

Mr. Joyse proposed that the funding for the Public Safety Commission be reinstated. He feels that this is a viable chartered commission and should be funded. Dennis Milanovich stated that the Public Safety Commission has a very small directive in the Charter and it needs to be fleshed out. It is a charter sanctioned commission and should be dealt with. The make up of the board members should also be revisited.

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Leo Miller stated that there were personality and control issues. The duties should be spelled out and they are to report to the Board of Selectmen. He would like to see it funded again.

Al Lawrence, Fire Marshal was asked his thoughts and he stated that the roll of the Public Safety Commission should be defined clearly before it is reinstituted. Michael Varney was asked his opinion and he agreed with Mr. Lawrence that more structure from the Board of Selectmen needs to be established for the commission through the charter revision.

The First Selectmen suggested perhaps funding the commission but not necessarily populating it. Al Lawrence remembers Mr. Scudieri cutting the funding after reading over the last 18 months of minutes from their meetings and deciding it did not warrant funding this committee. Mr. Cleary felt that the problem should be fixed before any funding is put into it. Mr. Joyse feels that it is in the charter, and in the scope of the total budget, \$1,000 is not too much.

Gary Feldman, a former member of the Public Safety Commission, told the Board that there were members from the ambulance corps and both fire department on the Commission. He felt that under some administrations much was accomplished but under others nothing was accomplished.

MOTION (JOYSE) SECONDED (CLEMENTS) AND DEFEATED TO REESTABLISH THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION'S BUDGET AT \$1,000 WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE TASKS OF THE COMMISSION BE DEFINED.

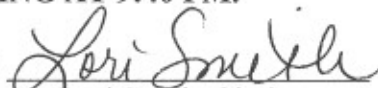
VOTE AYES: GERBER, JOYSE

NAYS: CLEMENTS, CLEARY, PINTO, PAGANI

Mr. Pagani stated that this needs to be addressed as a charge through a new Charter Revision Commission.

MOTION (CLEMENTS) SECONDED (GERBER) AND PASSED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:40 PM.

Submitted by


Lori Smith, Clerk